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SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF
COLLEGE STUDENTS IN INDIA

by

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Abstract: This study examines the attitudes of male and female students towards the wife, mother, and father roles. Data were collected from a sample of 210 university graduate students in Andhra Pradesh, India, in 1982. Fourteen independent variables are correlated with the three dependent variables for males and females. On a twenty item sex role attitude scale, 12 statements elicited traditional attitudes while six elicited liberal attitudes from the sample. In general, the students expressed traditional attitudes toward the wife role and the father role. Females' attitudes toward the mother role were more liberal than those of males. Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis reveals that, for females, father's education was the significant predictor in explaining the variance in the wife role attitudes and the mother role attitudes while caste was the salient variable in explaining the father role attitude variance. For males, number of brothers explained the greatest variance in the mother role attitudes. In terms of the amount of variance and the number of predictors explaining the variance in the three set role attitudes, the independent variables did not explain the variance as expected.

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SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN INDIA

INTRODUCTION

In traditional Indian families the roles of wife and mother are clearly defined and separated from that of the father. The domestic roles of men and women do not overlap and are not interchangeable. Men have always attended to the tasks outside the household. The woman has a complex constellation of roles: manager of the household; caretaker of the children; and distributor of love and affection. She routinely performs such tasks as cleaning, sweeping, and decorating the house; washing vessels; cooking and serving food; looking after children; and welcoming and entertaining guests (Mukherjee 1958; Sen-Gupta 1960; Rao and Rao 1982, Ross 1961; Jacobson 1977a; Wadley 1977; Mandelbaum 1970; L. Dube 1978; S. C. Dube 1963; Altekhar 1962; Prabhu 1962). Despite the rigid differentiation of roles, unqualified generalizations about sex roles would be misleading because of differences in caste, sect, region, language, and religion. For example, lower caste and untouchable women not only do household work but also engage in agricultural and nonagricultural work outside the household.

A brief survey of the status of women reveals that women are considered inferior and less desirable while men are viewed as superior and desirable. Male children are more highly valued than female children, and they are socialized in different ways. Female children are still considered an economic liability to the family, not only until they are married but, to some extent, throughout their lives. The socialization process emphasizes tolerance, patience, obedience, submission, sacrifice, modesty, and adaptation for females, while it teaches male children to be aggressive, assertive, superior and independent (Baig 1976; Nanda 1976; Jain 1975; deSouza 1975). The different qualities of males and females are reinforced from childhood by all the major institutions. "Guided by traditional concepts of proper feminine behavior and aware that their actions are inextricably linked to family honor, prestige, and ultimately, material rewards, women typically carry out their roles as chaste daughters and dutiful wives" (Jacobson 1977a: 8).

Although the status of women in India can be studied through various stages in life, emphasis will be given to the roles of wife and mother in the present study of sex roles. Once a woman is married, her role as a wife is clearly defined. Traditionally she lives with her husband, in a patrilineal joint family household where she is likely to play a submissive role and adapt to fit into her husband's family. Rules of proper conduct for the Hindu wife and husband are clearly laid down in such books as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and other Dharma Sashtas. These works have a great influence in shaping the behavior of wives. Sita, Savitri, Gandhara and other characters in these stories exemplify the proper and ideal behavior of wives. Religious teachings prepare girls to play subordinate roles in their husbands' families. Ross described the young wife's function in the new family as "mainly a servicing one, and the husband-wife relationship structurally quite different from that of the North American family, in which it is the pivot around which the family revolves" (1961: 152-154).

The status of a wife improves upon the birth of children. As a mother she is given higher "esteem in the family, a greater degree of independence, and the right to have her voice heard in the women's quarters" (Mandelbaum 1949: 103). Because of the importance accorded to a son, who is believed to save the father from going to hell, the position of a mother with sons improves even more. Mother-son relations are described as strong, close, affectionate, dependable, and tender. The bond between mother and son is:

celebrated in sacred writings, romanticized in popular tales, upheld in the actuality of family. A mother is respected, motherhood is revered. Sons give abundantly of both the tokens and the substance of esteem. She is not the aloof person a father is supposed to be. She is everlastingly loving and caring, certainly in ideal, often in reality . . . In that care lies her greatest fulfillment as a person (Mandelbaum 1970: 62).

The mother's influence gradually increases in domestic as well as outside matters. The mother is obeyed, makes important decisions, and enjoys certain rights. Dubois observed during his visit to India in the nineteenth century that the Hindu mother was the pivot of life in the family. The mother; showed "a shrewdness, a savingness and intelligence which would do honor to the best housewives in Europe" (1928: 192). They also enjoy the confidence of their husbands and are the guardians of family property, money and jewels. They make important decisions with regard to the arrangement of family, the marriages of their children and the distribution of alms and charities.

The mother was also given unparalleled respect and reverence in all Smriti works. Kane (1975: 580) quotes from different works the following relevant materials: "a father who is an outcast may be abandoned, but a mother (though Patita) is never an outcast to the son." "The sons, while living, would never be free from the debt he owes to his mother" except under extraordinary circumstances. "The mother excels in her greatness ten fathers or even the whole earth; there is no guru like the mother." Even Manu, who painted a dark picture of women, concedes higher status to mother's role. "The teacher (acharya) is ten times more venerable than a subteacher (upadhyaya), the father a hundred times more than the teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than the father" (Buhler, 1969: 56-67). Even in ancient times, no society gave higher status to women than India as seen in the following statement: "Where women are honored there the Gods rejoice; but where they are not honored, there all rites are fruitless; where women grieve, that family quickly perishes; but where they do not grieve that family prospers." This statement appears to be paradoxical to the earlier subordinate position accorded to women by Manu. It may be argued that, even though women were given an inferior position in the society, Manu was mainly interested in protecting, preserving and maintaining the integrity of women, as well as preventing their exploitation.

Although, ideally, a woman plays a submissive and subordinate role in the family, in reality, the woman in India exercises considerable power in family matters in addition to being the sole authority in the household

tasks. The traditional dominant role of a woman in the domestic aspects of family has not received as much attention as the subordinate role of women. Ross recognizes the woman's influence and states that:

her position as a consultant meant in reality that in most families she shared the responsibility of making the major family decision with the father The mother is well qualified to act as advisor to the head of the house, for as she is the pivot around which the family revolves she is in a strategic position in relation to the whole gamut of household intrigue. Through her relationships with the women of the household and larger kin groups she knows all the intimate details of the lives of family members and is thus in a position to advise her husband and later her sons, and so control their decisions In this way, 'mothers' may have great power although the traditional picture of the Hindu women shows her in a state of submission to husband and elders (1961: 102).

Both indigeneous and foreign writers have observed the influence of the women on their husbands' decisions not only as consultants but also as mediators. Children are much closer to their mothers than to their fathers. There is a distance between the father and the children, especially sons. Children are reluctant to approach the father because of the status differences. Usually, it is the mother who acts as a mediator between the children and father and sees that the children's desires are conveyed. With respect to the importance of wife's advisory role, Srinivas observed that "no important decision was taken, however, without the wife's consent if not permission, and frequently, the push to take a decision came from the wife" (1977: 231). Jacobson noted that women "help make important decisions in other family matters, especially in the selection of mates for their children. Men do some of the scouting, but, through their network of ties with women in other towns and villages, women frequently have access to information vital for evaluating prospects" (1977b: 62-63). Mace and Mace (1960) traced the dominant-submission patterns traditionally prescribed in the eastern families. Acknowledging that it is difficult for those accustomed to the freedom and equality that characterized husband-wife relations in the West to understand the family relations in India, they observed that "the wives who had the power to influence and fashion the life of the home shaped the destinies of men and of nations. They knew and recognized their limitations, and respected the frontiers they might not cross. But to think of them as inferior and unimportant members of society is greatly to underestimate their power" (Mace and Mace 1960: 227).

Since the turn of the century, the status of women has been changing because of industrialization and urbanization, the independence movement, spatial mobility, the principle of democracy, social legislation, and contacts with outside world. Many parents want their daughters to have higher education and equal occupational opportunities. With the expansion of the occupational structure, women are entering the world of paid employment in unprecedented numbers. Women have also gained considerable

political power as a result of their participation in the independence movement. Women are in political positions at every level from village councils to the national government. The impact of these socio-cultural changes on the sex role attitudes of the student population has not yet been examined. Since these changes have produced liberal attitudes toward sex roles in many developed countries, it is appropriate to examine the relationship between social changes and sex role attitudes in a developing country like India.

The large number of women working outside the home does not necessarily mean that women's household responsibilities and duties have declined. New roles may be added to the traditional roles increasing women's burden. Husbands and other relatives may not oppose women seeking employment but unequivocal support that includes sharing the household responsibilities appears to be lacking. Kapur captures the ambivalent attitudes of men when she states that husbands "like their wives to take up jobs but dislike them to change at all as their attitude towards their roles and status at home is concerned, and dislike their traditional responsibilities being neglected which results from their preoccupation with out-of-home vocation" (1970: 407). In the process of fulfilling responsibilities at home and at work, some employed women may face role conflict while in other cases roles of men and women are being redrawn to cope with the changing conditions in the family.

This study examines the attitudes of the college students toward the mother, wife, and father roles. It was expected that the sex of the respondents would have significant influence on their attitudes toward the three sex roles. More specifically, it was hypothesized that females would be more likely to express liberal attitudes toward all three roles than males. The analysis identifies the factors related to the sex role attitudes of the male and female respondents and also determines the factors that explain the greatest variance in sex role attitudes. This enables us to identify the factors that vary between the sexes in explaining the variance in sex role attitudes.

METHODS

Data for the study were collected from 210 graduate students who enrolled in three major universities in Andhra Pradesh, India (see Table 1). Questionnaires were administered by teachers of these universities and the students completed the instruments in the classroom in the fall of 1982. The sample was 56% male and 44% female. The mean age for the group was 22.8 years (ranging from 19 to 29). About 87% of the students were Hindus; the remaining 13% are of various other religious groups. The average education for fathers was 13.0 years and for mothers 10.4 years. Nearly 54% of the students came from families whose fathers were in high-ranking positions such as executives, managers, teachers, professionals, businessmen and IAS (Indian Administrative Service). The average income for the father was Rs. 1568 per month (US \$1 = Rs 11). The respondents had an average of 2.3 brothers and 2.4 sisters. A majority of

the sample came from rural communities. Half of the sample lived in nuclear families while the other half resided in joint families. The operationalization of the fourteen independent variables is presented in the Appendix.

The wife role, the mother role, and the father role, which are considered the dependent variables in the study, were operationalized by using a slightly revised scale dealing with "Traditional Wife Role," "Traditional Mother Role," and "Traditional Father Role," developed by Scanzoni (1975). The wife role is considered traditional if the interests of husband and children are emphasized and placed ahead of those of the wife. It is considered modern if the wife role emphasizes reduced commitment to the notion of subordination of the wife's interest. A thirteen item scale was used to measure attitudes toward the wife role. The mother role is treated as traditional if the interests of children are placed ahead of the mother's or if mother-centered considerations superordinate the individual-centered considerations. Five items were used to measure attitudes toward the mother role. The husband's role is considered traditional if the emphasis is given to the husband as head and as unique provider of the family. Modernism is indicated by weaker congruence with the traditional patriarchal ideology. Two items measuring attitudes toward the husband role constituted the scale. Respondents were asked to indicate their choice for each of the items in the three scales to one of the five responses: strongly disagree; disagree; sometimes agree and sometimes disagree; agree; and strongly agree. The responses were summed for each of the three dependent variables. The highest possible score for wife role is 65, for mother role is 25, and for husband role is 10 while the lowest possible scores are 13, 5 and 2 respectively. For each of the three scales, a lower score indicates a "traditional" emphasis while a high score indicates a "modern" emphasis. Mean values for the positions of wife role, mother role and husband roles were 37.5, 14.7 and 4.2 respectively. In order to determine the reliability of the three subscales, Cronbach's alpha was computed. Coefficients of internal consistency are .74 for wife role, .68 for mother role and .62 for father role.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Table 2 includes the mean values of the male and female Indian students' attitudes toward the wife, mother and father roles. Both male and female students expressed traditional sex role attitudes on 12 statements on this scale and liberal attitudes on six items. On the remaining two items, females expressed liberal attitudes while males embraced traditional views.

In considering the wife role, both males and females in this study think that a woman's most important task is caring for children and husband, that she obtains more satisfaction through children, that she is suited for certain kinds of jobs, that she should give up her new job if it inconveniences the family members, and that she should work only when there is financial need. The woman should be protected throughout her life; she should give importance to the family needs over her own; and she should assume the domestic role even if she is educated. At the same time the

students disagree with the statements that a woman should compete with men in her job, that she should not have equal authority in the family, that she should not expect the same salary for a similar job, that her place should be in the home, and that she should not mix freely with men.

With regard to the mother role, both sexes report that a marriage is not complete without children and that school-age children suffer if mother works. By contrast, they disagree with the statement that a mother cannot be warm and affectionate with her children if she works. It is interesting to find that males and females differ with regard to children's success and their freedom. Males feel that parents get more satisfaction from a son's success than a daughter's, and that girls should not be granted as much freedom and independence as boys. Female students express more liberal attitudes toward these issues.

In considering the father role, both sexes agree that a man should have the major responsibility of supporting the family members and that he should be the head of the family.

T-test was used to detect significant differences between males and females on attitudes toward the three sex roles. In general the students embraced traditional attitudes toward the wife role and the father role, but females expressed significantly less traditional attitudes toward the wife role than males. The sexes did not differ in their attitudes toward the father role. Females expressed more liberal attitudes than males toward the mother role.

An examination of the attitudes of the sexes by item of the subscale points out some apparent inconsistencies in their attitudes toward the three roles. For example, the respondents think that a husband should be the head of the family and should support the family, but at the same time, they do not think that the woman's place should be in the home and they do think that a wife should have equal authority with her husband in making decisions. This apparent inconsistency can be explained by the fact that although women seem to play dependent, docile, subordinate and secondary roles in the family, they exercise great influence. The finding is consistent with the observation made by Carstairs (1974: 235) that the "women could be quite strong-minded beneath their submissive demeanour, and that they were very good in getting their own way." Srinivas (1977: 231) also observes that the relationship between husband and wife changes as they mature in marital bond, and that "the balance was tilted in favor of the wife, but this was concealed more or less effectively by symbols of wifely deference, and expressions of devotion to the lord and master." These observations lead to the conclusion that the husband has the responsibility of supporting the family but, at the same time, the wife does exercise considerable power in making important decisions in the family.

Neither males nor females in this study agree with the statement that "women should not mix freely with males in their social relations." This is a surprising finding in a society where segregation of the sexes is common.

It may be that the respondents have defined "mixing freely" in a very restricted sense. For instance, in India merely talking to a person of an opposite sex and going to restaurants with him/her without ever being physically touched can be defined as "mixing freely." Even this kind of mixing is generally confined to the educational setting, especially outside the class-room situation. Male and female students are still segregated in social, educational, political, and religious settings. At weddings, feasts, social parties, temples or Shrines, and other informal gatherings, there is a tendency for males and females to sit separately. Even among educated urbanites, sexual segregation is observed outside the home. Hence, it may be concluded that the expression of liberal attitudes here is based on a restricted sense of "mixing freely."

It is interesting to note that both sexes agree that a woman's most important task is to take care of her husband and children, that her greatest satisfaction comes from children, and that she should assume domestic roles even if she is highly educated. Although the enrollment of women in educational institutions has been steadily increasing and the political and economic status of women is continuously rising, for most educated women family needs are more important than their personal ambitions. An expression of these traditional attitudes finds rationale in the argument that a key to improvement in a woman's position at home does not lie in her adding to the family income. It is even argued that the working woman's status is much worse than that of those other similarly placed women who do not work. Because of these common notions, "working women in India often leave their jobs in mid-career to devote themselves wholly to domestic responsibilities" (Madan 1976: 71); careerism has not yet relegated the family to the background in the lives of working women. Even if women work, Karve cautioned that "in the final analysis everywhere women have to move towards establishing harmony in the domestic as well as outdoor roles in the interest of the family, nation, and society at large" (1975: 129).

Neither male nor female respondents believe that "a working mother cannot be as warm and affectionate with her children compared to a non-working mother." This finding can be explained in two ways. First, there is a common notion that motherhood is more important than womanhood. It is the sole responsibility of a mother to provide expressive function for the children. Second, in many cases working mothers do not have to spend much time attending the domestic chores after work because of the availability of help (relatives or servants). This allows her to spend more time with her children. This argument finds support in the observation made by Srinivas that "educated Indian women are able to hold demanding jobs and be housewives and mothers at the same time thanks to the availability of servants, and to their ability to draw upon their wide kin-networks for help in crises" (1977: 236). Consequently, many female students feel that they can successfully blend traditional household responsibilities and modern occupational obligations into their social lives.

In this study the males consistently expressed more traditional attitudes than the females. This finding is similar to the conclusions observed in American studies (Scanzoni 1976, 1978; Duncan and Duncan 1978; Sexton 1979; Rao and Rao 1983; Tomeh 1978). The same pattern is reported by Tomeh (1981) in her study of sex role attitudes among Korean students.

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients between the background variables and the three sex role attitudes. Females were more likely to have liberal attitudes toward the wife, mother, and father roles than males. Higher caste respondents expressed liberal attitudes toward the wife role and the father role while lower caste respondents embraced traditional attitudes toward these roles. The mother role attitudes were not significantly related to the respondent's caste. Father's education is significantly and positively related to the attitudes toward the three sex roles. The higher the father's education, the more liberal the students' attitudes toward all three roles. The mother's education was strongly related to the wife role attitudes but not to the mother and father role attitudes. A positive significant relationship is found between the father's occupation and the wife role attitudes; the children of fathers with high occupational status expressed liberal attitudes toward the wife role. Number of sisters is negatively associated with the mother role attitudes. The students with large numbers of sisters expressed traditional mother role attitudes. Community size is positively related to the wife and mother role attitudes.

In order to determine the relative contribution of each independent variable in explaining the variance in the dependent variables while the other independent variables are statistically controlled, a stepwise multiple-regression analysis was computed for the total sample and for the subsamples of males and females with the wife role, the mother role, and the father role as criterion variables. The thirteen demographic and socio-economic variables formed the item pool from which the optimal models were constructed for each group of respondents.

Table 4 presents the effects of the strongest independent variables on the three sex roles for the total sample. The three-variable model for the wife role attitudes indicates that the students who had fathers with higher levels of education, were females and lived in large communities tended to express less traditional attitudes. Based on the standardized regression coefficients (beta weights) and the increments in R^2 , it is obvious that the explained variance in the wife role attitudes is relatively small. Of the three predictor variables in the model, father's education, the most powerful explanatory variable, explained 9.4% of the total variance while sex and community size explained 1.7% and 1.9% respectively in the wife role attitudes. Sex and number of sisters emerged as the most salient predictors of the students' attitudes toward the mother role. Females and the students who reported fewer sisters expressed more liberal attitudes toward the mother role. Sex is the most powerful predictor explaining 3.9% of the variance in the criterion variable while number of sisters explained 1.9% of the variance in the same variable. Not a single predictor entered into the

regression equation in explaining the variance in the father role attitudes of the students when the effect of independent variables was removed.

For male students, stepwise regression equations were computed for the three sex role attitudes. The number of brothers is the only predictor explaining the variance in the wife role attitudes (see Table 5). Males with larger numbers of brothers tend to express more traditional attitudes toward the wife role. Number of brothers explained 5.6% of the variance in the criterion variable.

Number of sisters is the only predictor explaining the variance in the mother role attitudes of males. The more sisters a male had, the more traditional were his attitudes toward the mother role. Number of sisters explained 9.2% of the variance in the criterion variable. It is equally surprising to find that not a single variable emerged as a predictor in explaining the variance in the father role attitudes of males.

Table 6 presents regression models for Indian female students for the three sex role attitudes. Father's education emerged as the only significant predictor, explaining 18.2% of the variance in the wife role attitudes of female students. If the father's education was high, females were likely to hold less traditional attitudes toward the wife role. Father's education also emerged as the only powerful predictor explaining 7.8% of the variance in the mother role attitudes of female students. The higher the father's education, the more liberal the attitudes of females toward mother role. Finally, caste was the only significant predictor explaining 7.4% of the variance in father role attitudes. Higher caste females expressed less traditional attitudes toward the father role than lower caste females.

In the regression analysis: (1) only a few predictors explained the variance in the wife, mother and father roles; and (2) the explained variance in the three sex role attitudes was small. In general, the background variables did not produce significant differences in the students' attitudes toward the three sex roles. For example, changes in the units of independent variables did not result in similar changes in the father role attitudes, thus implying a consensus on the part of the students about the importance of the father role.

For the total sample, sex was the only significant predictor explaining the variance in attitudes toward the wife and the mother roles. Males expressed more traditional attitudes while females embraced less traditional attitudes. Consideration of the changes occurring in Indian culture such as urbanization, technological development, employment of women, increase in female enrollment in educational institutions, and western influence on social attitudes toward the acceptance of women's employment should be taken into account in examining the differences in sex role attitudes between males and females. The less traditional attitudes of females toward the sex roles can be explained in terms of the perceived changes in status, power, and prestige of employed women. Outside employment is seen as a sign of independence and equality between the sexes. It is considered a means to

escape the traditional "status trap." Additionally, the federal government has been advocating equality of women as a basic condition for the social, economic, and political development of the nation, and has given high priority to the development of mechanisms to release women from their dependent and unequal status (Indian Council of Social Science Research 1975: 1-5).

In addition to sex, father's education and community size are both powerful predictors of attitudes toward the mother. These demographic characteristics generally have similar correlations with American students' sex role attitudes. Fathers with higher education have daughters with more liberal attitudes toward the wife and mother roles. It should be noted that, although some of the demographic variables explained the variance in the sex role attitudes of the Indian students, their attitudes are still fairly traditional. Hence, caution should be used when the findings are compared with those from other cultures. The observations made by Jones are worth mentioning here: "perhaps nowhere in the world is traditionalism stronger than in the India of today. A modernizing country, India nevertheless embraces techniques and norms which have been extant for millenia. Truly a land of contrasts, this country is probably the most paradoxical in that modern values and methods are initiated and perpetually challenge traditional values and methods, while seemingly affecting little change" (1980: 1).

Implications. These findings may be interpreted in terms of methodological as well as theoretical implications. Although students who are male, come from high income families, are unmarried, come from rural communities, and major in liberal studies seem to be overrepresented in the sample, the sample can be considered typical of a university student population in India with only a few exceptions. The sample is sufficiently diversified that sex role attitudes do vary with sample characteristics. The findings of the study may be generalized to the student population attending the universities in India, but, because of regional, economic, language, caste and other socio-cultural differences, these findings cannot be generalized to the total population in India.

Since few studies have been conducted about sex role attitudes of Indian students and factors affecting these attitudes, we cannot compare our findings with those of other studies. Conclusions drawn from this study should be considered tentative until further testing is done to validate the findings not only by using a cross-section of student population but also by using large samples of all ages and all social groups from the larger population.

Like many developing societies, India is undergoing tremendous structural changes that are affecting various dimensions of the family. In recent times, the status of women is changing socially, politically, and economically. By attending colleges and universities, entering the occupational world, and moving into the political arena, women are contributing to the development of Indian society. The question that

remains is to what extent these structural and situational changes affect the sex role attitudes of women in India. This study reveals that, although both males and females expressed traditional attitudes toward sex roles, female attitudes are less traditional than male attitudes. Both sexes expressed traditional attitudes toward the father role; females expressed less traditional attitudes toward the wife role than did males; and females held more liberal attitudes toward the mother role than males. Despite their less traditional sex role attitudes, the actual role performance of females in the family has not changed much. Employed women are responsible for both the domestic chores and outside work. Husbands rarely participate in the household tasks. Women are expected to blend the domestic roles and the employee roles in the interest of the family. The availability of servants and relatives who do most of the household tasks has relieved the employed women from most domestic chores although they are still expected to supervise them. Thus, one finds little change in the traditional expectations of male and female roles in the family although women's status in the occupational world is changing.

The findings of the study may have implications for marriage in the future since women expressed less traditional sex role attitudes. It may be argued that males and females should reconcile their sex role attitudes before they are married. Since most marriages are arranged by the parents, however, it is unlikely that the differences in sex role attitudes between potential mates will enter into the process of mate selection. Although tremendous changes are taking place in India, they have left the institutions of family largely untouched. People are still traditional and have not accepted egalitarian relations in the family.

APPENDIX

The independent variables are operationalized as follows: sex (1 = male, 2 = female), age, religion (1 = Hindus, 2 = Others), Caste (1 = Brahmins, 2 = Non-Brahmins), father's education, mother's education, father's occupation (1 = unskilled through 9 = IAS [Indian Administrative Service] or similar position), mother's occupation (1 = employed, 2 = not employed), father's income, mother's income, number of brothers, number of sisters, family type (1 = nuclear family, 2 = joint family), and community size (1 = less than 5,000 through 3 = 25,000-49,999 and 6 = 500,000 or more).

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN STUDENTS (N = 210)

Characteristics	Sample (%)
Sex	
Male	56
Female	44
Age	
20 or less	7
21-22	35
23-44	34
25 or more	24
Father's Education	
8 or less	24
9-12	23
13-16	33
17 or more	20
Father's Income	
Rs. 750 or less	28
Rs. 715-1250	25
Rs. 1251-2000	25
Rs. 2001 or more	22
Number of Brothers	
0	15
1	22
2	31
3	19
4 or more	13
Number of Sisters	
0	17
1	27
2	25
3	15
4 or more	16
Community Size	
Less than 5,000	55
5,000-24,999	16
25,000-99,999	11
100,000 or more	18
Family Type	
Nuclear	55
Joint	45

TABLE 2. SEX ROLE ATTITUDES SCALE ITEMS AND THE MEAN VALUES FOR MALES AND FEMALES

Items	Males	Females	T-Test
	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	
<u>Wife Role</u>			
1. A wife's most important task in life should be taking care of her husband and children	1.79	2.09	*
2. A woman's greatest satisfaction in life comes through her children	2.16	2.17	-
3. If she works, she should not try to compete (get ahead)	3.20	3.63	**
4. A wife should not have equal authority with her husband in making decisions	3.59	4.14	**
5. If she has the same job as a man who has to support his family, she should not expect the same salary	3.59	3.87	-
6. A woman is suited for only certain kinds of jobs because of emotional and mental nature	2.58	2.98	*
7. A wife should give up her job whenever it inconveniences her husband and children	2.40	2.67	*
8. If a mother of young children works, it should be only while the family needs the money	2.56	2.74	-
9. A woman's place should be in the home ⁺	3.59	3.82	-
10. A woman should be protected first by her father, then by her husband, and finally by her son	2.24	2.77	**
11. Woman should not mix freely with males in her social relations ⁺	3.26	3.36	-
12. A woman should give more importance to the needs of her family than her personal ambitions and needs ⁺	2.35	2.73	*
13. Although a women is highly educated, she should be encouraged to assume domestic role ⁺	2.62	2.58	-

cont./

TABLE 2. SEX ROLE ATTITUDES SCALE ITEMS AND THE MEAN VALUES FOR MALES AND FEMALES (continued)

Items	Males \bar{X}	Females \bar{X}	T-Test
<u>Mother Role</u>			
14. A working mother can not be just as warm and affectionate with her children as a mother who does not work	3.03	3.39	*
15. The parents get more satisfaction when a son does well (get ahead) in his occupation than when a daughter gets ahead in hers	2.71	3.35	**
16. A marriage is incomplete without children	2.96	2.75	-
17. A young girl should not be permitted as much independence and freedom as boys	2.62	3.25	**
18. School going children are likely to suffer if mother works	2.77	2.84	-
<u>Father Role</u>			
19. A married man's chief responsibility should be to support his wife and family	1.77	1.84	-
20. The husband should be the head of the family	2.12	2.51	*
Traditional Wife Role Attitudes	30.42	33.41	**
Traditional Mother Role Attitudes	14.09	15.58	**
Traditional Father Role Attitudes	3.89	4.35	-
Sex Role Attitudes	48.40	53.34	**

*Significant at .05 level or higher

**Significant at .01 level or higher

*These items are developed by the authors

TABLE 3. ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF THE INDIAN STUDENTS (N = 210)

Characteristics	Sex Role Attitudes ¹			
	SRA	TWR	TMR	TFR
Sex	.242**	.232**	.197**	.119*
Age	-.008	-.016	-.011	.039
Religion	-.023	-.016	.000	-.077
Caste	-.219**	-.271**	-.038	-.120*
Father's Education	.276**	.304**	.144**	.131*
Mother's Education	.145*	.178**	.070	-.002
Father's Occupation	.137*	.155**	.091	.009
Mother's Employment Status	.001	.016	-.012	-.039
Father's Income	.055	.077	-.020	.057
Mother's Income	-.069	-.053	-.092	-.011
Number of Brothers	-.020	.039	-.017	.077
Number of Sisters	-.042	.022	-.134*	.003
Community Size	.202*	.221**	.117*	.008
Family Type	-.003	.024	-.078	.039

¹SRA = Sex Role Attitude
TWR = Traditional Wife Role Attitude
TMR = Traditional Mother Role Attitude
TFR = Traditional Father Role Attitude

*Significant at .05 level

**Significant at .01 level or higher

TABLE 4. STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE STRONGEST PREDICTORS OF SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF THE INDIAN STUDENTS (N = 210)

Predictors	B (Unstandardized)	Standard Error of B	Beta (Standardized)	R ²	T-Test
<u>Wife Role</u>					
Father's Education	.360	.078	.306	.094	4.64
Sex	2.163	1.071	.141	.111	2.11
Community Size	.571	.273	.142	.130	2.09
<u>Mother Role</u>					
Sex	1.445	.500	.197	.039	2.89
Number of Sisters	-.323	.157	-.139	.058	-2.06
<u>Father Role</u>					
No variables entered in the Model					

TABLE 5. STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE STRONGEST PREDICTORS OF SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF INDIAN MALE STUDENTS (N = 118)

Predictors	B (Unstandardized)	Standard Error of B	Beta (Standardized)	R ²	T-Test
<u>Wife Role</u>					
Number of Brothers	-.831	.354	-.236	.056	-2.34
<u>Mother Role</u>					
Number of Sisters	-.660	.215	-.303	.092	-3.07
<u>Father Role</u>					
None entered in the Model					

TABLE 6. STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE STRONGEST PREDICTORS OF SEX ROLE ATTITUDES OF INDIAN FEMALE STUDENTS (N = 98).

Predictors	B (Unstandardized)	Standard Error of B	Beta (Standardized)	R ²	T-Test
<u>Wife Role</u>					
Father's Education	.815	.200	.426	.182	4.08
<u>Mother Role</u>					
Father's Education	.229	.091	.280	.078	2.52
<u>Father Role</u>					
Caste	-.393	.160	-.273	.074	-2.45

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